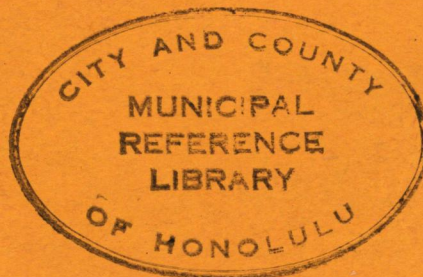


Report on Proposed  
Honolulu Civic Center



**FOR REFERENCE**

not to be taken from this room

City Planning Commission  
September 15, 1944

NA4422  
H3  
H6  
1944



# HONOLULU HAWAII

CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION

JANUARY  
1941

## LEGEND

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1 ALOHA TOWER                       | 20 CITY HALL                           |
| 2 LABOR BOARD BUILDING†             | 21 MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM†               |
| 3 AUDITORIUM                        | 22 MISSION MEMORIAL HALL               |
| 4 TAX COLLECTOR                     | 23 MISSION HOUSE                       |
| 5 TREASURER†                        | 24 KAWAIAHAO CHURCH                    |
| 6 LAND OFFICE, ETC. (HEALTH BLDG.)* | 25 CENTRAL INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL         |
| 7 PUBLIC WORKS (T.H. OFFICE BLDG.)  | 26 ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL              |
| 8 JUDICIARY BUILDING                | 27 ARMY & NAVY Y.M.C.A.                |
| 9 ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM (PALACE)*     | 28 CENTRAL Y.M.C.A.                    |
| 10 LIBRARY OF HAWAII                | 29 Y.W.C.A.                            |
| 11 DEPT. OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION†     | 30 ALEXANDER YOUNG HOTEL               |
| 12 IOLANI BARRACKS                  | 31 SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE           |
| 13 ARMORY                           | 32 FEDERAL BUILDING                    |
| 14 EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE BLDG.†     | 33 POST OFFICE EXTENSION†              |
| 15 GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE             | 34 COAST GUARD AND LIGHTHOUSE SERVICE† |
| 16 SOCIAL SECURITY BUILDING†        | 35 CUSTOM HOUSE†                       |
| 17 BOARD OF HEALTH BLDG.†           | 36 ARMY BUILDING†                      |
| 18 QUEEN'S HOSPITAL                 | 37 NAVY BUILDING†                      |
| 19 MEDICAL GROUP BLDG.              | 38 IMMIGRATION STATION                 |

\* New use proposed for existing building.  
† New building proposed.

## MAP OF THE City of Honolulu SHOWING PROPOSED PLANS FOR THE Central Business Area AND THE Civic Center

SCALE IN FEET  
0 200 400 800 1200

## NOTE

An improved street system with greater parking facilities provided are the main objectives in the proposed plans for the business district. . . . The widening and extending of existing streets and the creation of "hollow-square" parking areas are the means recommended. . . . The scheme for the civic center as prepared in collaboration with the Territorial Planning Board places emphasis on two of Honolulu's major interests—the palace and the water front. . . . With park development to enhance them, each serves as a focal point or terminal feature for the extension of Mililani Street—which in its mauka-makai direction take full advantage of the trade winds. . . . The grouping of the buildings is based on a functional arrangement and creates sub-centers of specific activity and control. . . .

- ⊗ SYMBOLS  
--- PARKING AREA  
--- EXISTING STREET OR PIER  
EFFECTED BY PROPOSED PLAN





Honolulu Planning Dept.

REPORT ON PROPOSED HONOLULU CIVIC CENTER

NA 4422  
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I. INTRODUCTION:

Of major importance in the preparation of the Master Plan for the city of Honolulu is the location and relocation of the public buildings with regard to the city as a whole. In general it may be said that public buildings should be placed naturally, that they must be in a scale and proportion harmonious with the city and be integral parts of it, that they are never so fine as when properly placed as to their natural surroundings.

"A city in its material expression cannot well be considered apart from its public buildings because its active life is so closely bound up with them, conversely the subject of public buildings cannot be treated without reference to that city. Great distinction is given to a city by public buildings, its significance, however, is extremely variable both in its nature and its quality." -- Edward Bennet, "Public Buildings and Quasi-Public Buildings"

II. LOCATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS: (Civic Center)

In its study to determine the most logical and useful plan and location for Honolulu's Civic Center and to provide sufficient area for future public and legislative building sites, the City Planning Commission has taken the following factors into consideration:

1. Land use -- that is, the trend of expansion of business and industry, as well as government and others.
2. Population trends.
3. Changes and trends in transportation facilities for moving people and commodities.
4. Present and future vehicular traffic demands.
5. The effect of the land use and character of surrounding areas upon the functions and aesthetics of the Civic Center development, and conversely the effect of the location and function of the Civic Center upon the surrounding areas.

All of these factors must be judged by sound economic reasoning to insure the success of any chosen plan.

"The site of a public buildings must be such that it will not lie in the immediate path of the expansion of business or industrial activities or if so that it will be sufficiently removed in point of view of distance to make its interference negligible." -- Edward H. Bennet, "Public Buildings and Quasi-Public Buildings"

The use of the land studies as outlined have been applied to the problem of choosing the Civic Center site with further



consideration being given to certain characteristics advocated by men well versed in City Planning. These characteristics follow:

1. The Civic Center site should be large enough to allow for the grouping of Federal, Territorial, City and County and other public or semi-public buildings. This is a desirable grouping as it promotes efficient and cooperative function of distinct government agencies, it provides more general accessibility to the public, and enhances the architectural significance of the whole.
2. The Civic Center site should provide sufficient area to accommodate additional buildings or building expansion as the Territorial growth should dictate.
3. The Civic Center Plan shall not be such that it will prevent the best use and expansion of the land areas immediately adjacent.
4. The site should be centrally located, convenient to the main commercial and business districts, served adequately by the various types of transportation and well integrated with the street system of the city.
5. The land chosen for the development of the Civic Center should all come under government control in the early stages of development. Failure to thus acquire the land would forecast the failure of the scheme. This failure would be caused by the increase in value of the proposed land area due to improvements constructed by individual owners, which would make the cost of the land prohibitive, thereby forcing the various government agencies to abandon the plan before its conclusion, and thus preventing the completion of a centralized Civic Center development.

These characteristics have been given due consideration by the City Planning Commission in its study of the most feasible and desirable location for Honolulu's Civic Center. This location is planned to include all the necessary Federal, Territorial, City and County and kindred important public and semi-public buildings.

### III. PROPOSED CIVIC CENTER:

The City Planning Commission recommends that the area bounded by Richards Street, Beretania Street, Emma Street, Kukui Street, Fort Street, proposed Vineyard Street Arterial, Lusitana Street, Alapai Street, South Street, Kawaiahao Street, Mission Lane, Queen Street, and Punchbowl Street, as the location for Honolulu's Civic Center. This plan incorporates the suggested plan of the Territorial Planning Board in its study on the "Executive-Legislative Quarters - Civic Center, City of Honolulu, Publication 10, January 1941", with modification to include additional areas to provide for needed off-street parking and allow for the future expansion of public and semi-public needs to meet the demands of this fast growing community.



The Territorial Planning Board report for future public and legislative buildings as outlined in (Publication No. 10) points out the fact that in planning Honolulu's Civic Center it is desirable to consider the preservation of historic landmarks.

The City Planning Commission's suggested plan for the Civic Center is based on the following reasons:

1. The site as proposed embraces the present Civic Center which is a part of Honolulu and Hawaii that is picturesque, beautiful, and expressive of much that has gone before. This center should be preserved and added to, rather than abandoned.

The buildings of which the present Civic Center is composed are as follows:

- Iolani Palace
- Judiciary Building (Alii Iolani Hale)
- City Hall
- Post Office
- Territorial Board of Health
- Tax Office Building
- Library of Hawaii
- Archives

In addition to these buildings there are several semi-public and historic buildings that add to the informal and picturesque plan of our Civic Center. This makes our grouping of public buildings in the Civic Center different and unique in comparison with those of any and all states of the Union. The Civic Center development proposed in this plan preserves definitely the historic and emblematic edifices of former Hawaii. The buildings of this type that contribute so much to the informal character of the proposed development are:

- Kawaiahaeo Church
- Mission buildings
- Mission Memorial
- Iolani Barracks

Included in the City Planning Commission's plan for expansion would be:

- Washington Place (home of the governor)
- St. Andrews Cathedral
- Central Intermediate (former home of Princess Ruth)
- Queen's Hospital

The rapidity of growth and the continuous expansion of our Territory demands that provision be made for needed public buildings such as:

- Legislative and Executive Building
- Auditor
- Treasurer



Labor Board  
Federal Post Office (Annex)  
Federal Court House (new)  
Department of Public Instruction  
Public Welfare and Social Security Buildings  
City Hall Annex

All of these buildings can be located in the area recommended by the City Planning Commission.

2. The site as proposed is centrally located, convenient to the main commercial and business districts. It is served adequately by various types of transportation and well integrated with the street system of the city of Honolulu, being bounded by the mauka and makai cross-town arteries, served by them, but not interfering with the uniform flow of traffic.

Further, it must be borne in mind that the Central Business District together with the industrial area at Iwilei represents approximately 25% of the assessable tax value of land and improvements within the City of Honolulu. Moving the Civic Center would create a void in the areas of the present Civic Center which might endanger the valuation of this important tax structure. This would cause a decrease in tax valuation in the present Central Business area of the city, and an increase of tax valuation in areas now developed for residential, hotel and apartment, and industrial use. By all means, let us preserve our existing Central Business District and improve it by proper planning of government and semi-public buildings on its outskirts. "Overblown attempts of Civic Greatness have become signals of municipal bankruptcy"--- Lewis Mumford, "Whither Honolulu?"

The present street system within the proposed Honolulu Civic Center is well integrated to efficiently move motor vehicle traffic and mass transportation if sufficient areas for off-street parking are provided within the various building sites. The elimination of curb parking will provide additional moving traffic lanes, which will help to move traffic more rapidly. In some cases it will be necessary to plan for routing of traffic because of narrow substandard street facilities. The routing of traffic and elimination of parking at the curb will provide increased mobility of vehicular traffic, free from the inconvenience of congestion and delay now experienced by motorists going to and from their points of destination in the central downtown business district. It is proposed to widen certain streets within the area planned for Honolulu's Civic Center.

3. The proposed Honolulu Civic Center plan does not set up a barrier for the best use or expansion of the land adjacent to it; conversely, it separates the Central Business District from the encroachment of industrial development and other types of business. It is so located as to efficiently serve the business area, the industrial area, and the waterfront without in any



way hindering the smooth interchange of governmental functions, and will allow for business to continue to expand in the waikiki direction.

4. This proposed Civic Center plan provides sufficient areas to accommodate additional building expansion as the Territorial growth dictates. The present Civic Center, consisting of public and semi-public buildings totals 76.23 acres. The area proposed for expansion totals 59.95 acres, or an increase of 78.6% in addition to the area now being used. This increase in area should well take care of the government building program for the years to come.

#### IV. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED PLAN:

Perhaps one of the most needed public buildings in the order of priority is the Legislative-Executive Building. The Territorial Planning Board plan (Publication 10, January 1941) placed this building in the Schuman Block (bounded by Richards Street, Beretania Street, Miller Street, and Hotel Street). This site seems adequate, provided a portion of the adjacent area (Armory Block) bounded by Miller Street, Beretania Street, Punchbowl Street and Hotel Street, is acquired for off-street parking. This would necessitate the removal of the Armory and in addition the tearing down of existing dwellings that are outmoded and have no place within the heart of the city because of their use and unsightliness. Under this plan, Iolani Barracks would remain and be used as a museum.

If this proposed site is found to be too small for the Executive-Legislative Building, then the Armory Block could be used for the site of this building and the Schuman Block set aside for off-street parking. Surely, the Armory Block is not too small to house the Executive-Legislative Building. The informal plan of the present Civic Center is established, and should be stressed and kept in a tropical mode, rather than a formal stereotype plan as is so often seen being adopted.

A well planned Executive Building constructed and properly landscaped on either of these two sites would fall naturally into the informal scheme.

The City Planning Commission in their recommendation for this proposed site desire to stress the opinion that the Department of Public Instruction be housed in the present Central Intermediate School. This is suggested because it is the belief of the City Planning Commission that the present site of Central Intermediate as a school is hazardous for school children, as it is surrounded by four major streets, and has no adequate playground. The school population now attending Central Intermediate should be transferred to schools situated in more convenient areas and within close proximity to the homes of the students. This would save the Territory a considerable sum of money.



Further consideration given to the preference of this proposed site for Honolulu's Civic Center is based on our belief that buildings like the City Hall, Post Office, Judiciary and Library are not apt to be moved. Such being the case, should not the expansion of future government buildings be so planned and developed around these existing buildings? This would keep the government offices and agencies in close relationship to one another. To do otherwise would mean the separating of these buildings.

The estimated cost for acquiring the additional 59.95 acres together with existing improvements totals approximately \$6,270,000.

The moving of the Civic Center would necessitate acquiring at least 70 acres of new land, now developed for either industrial and business, hotel and apartment, or residential use. At the present time, industrial and business property is at a premium and expensive. Therefore, it seems rather far fetched to argue that there is cheap land available in other areas proposed for the Honolulu Civic Center site. Any estimate of cost at this time, based on tax value, will be a guess at best, due to the present abnormal values of real estate. The cost for the construction of buildings that house the various government departments would be the same wherever the site might be. Again, it would be well to reflect and consider the fact that with the expansion of the Civic Center as proposed in this plan, the government would be improving the area by demolishing deteriorated and outmoded buildings now occupying a large portion of the proposed site. Further, the relocation of the Civic Center would necessitate further expenditure of money to replace existing government buildings. It has been suggested that this rebuilding would not take place for a long period of time. This being true, it would be unwise to scatter the Civic Center during the development period, adding materially to the difficulties of free transaction of business by public officials, as well as greatly inconveniencing the public in its relations with government officials, with no guarantee of the ultimate consummation of any plan, because of the economics and changing public sentiment involved. The improvement of this area by new governmental buildings will be advantageous to local government in the preservation of the tax structure and in aesthetic development.

#### V. PROPOSED CIVIC CENTER PLANS:

Several proposed plans for Honolulu's future Civic Center have been suggested by the Postwar Planning Division of the Territorial Department of Public Works. "The Postwar Planning Division of the Territorial Public Works was created by the Governor this year under the Hawaii Defense Act for the purpose of furnishing recommendations, estimates, etc. for the guidance of the Legislature in providing appropriations and priorities for public works projects, including housing accommodations for the legislative-executive quarters and other territorial agencies". Memorandum--(Honolulu Civic Center for analysis - By Territorial Postwar Planning Division.)



The City Planning Commission has reviewed these tentative plans as submitted by the Territorial Postwar Planning Division of the Territorial Public Works in their study of Honolulu's future Civic Center as part of the Master Plan. A meeting between the City Planning Commission, the Territorial Postwar Planning Division and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce was held in the Assembly Hall of the City Hall on June 28, 1944. At this meeting the chairman of the Postwar Planning Division, Mr. Benjamin Rush, and representatives of his division outlined proposed plans for Honolulu's future Civic Center.

The City Planning Commission believes that their proposed plan incorporating the present Civic Center would serve all of the needs, conserve what we have, and avoid a very large expenditure of funds.

The need for industrial areas today is critical and any plan that tends to curtail the use of the present zoned area would only lead to the further zoning of land for industrial use within areas now developed for residential uses. Further, the Army and Navy is gradually absorbing large areas of industrial property in the Kalihi-kai, Kapalama, and Kewalo areas, and this has created a serious problem. The Kalihi-kai and Kapalama industrial areas will be further handicapped if zoning for building height is enacted into law, by reason of the development of Keehi Lagoon.

Because of this, the City Planning Commission is at present studying the need for possible expansion of industrial area waikiki of Piikoi Street. This area at the present is vacant property and is zoned for hotel and apartment use.

The City Planning Commission is of the opinion that the area in the Kewalo section makai of Ala Moana between Fort Armstrong and Kewalo Basin should be set aside for governmental industrial use, such as the incinerators and the proposed sewage treatment plant. To develop it for other use would be economically unsound, and mean the disruption of the city's zoning plan achieved after years of study.

## VI. CONCLUSION:

The City Planning Commission is of the opinion that the Territory and the City and County should cooperate to develop something that will have not only the charm of old Hawaii but the dignity and beauty which rightfully belong to this chief outpost in the Pacific. It is believed this can best be accomplished by leaving the present Civic Center as it is with Iolani Palace being converted into an historical repository as the center. The City Planning Commission, after careful study of various plans, recommends that Honolulu's future Civic Center be located in the area they have indicated. This plan would preserve the historic centers of Honolulu and Hawaii and provide for the future expansion in an informal and picturesque design which will accentuate the tropical surroundings of a greater Honolulu.



All of the proposed Territorial, Federal and City and County building expansion would comply with a definite logical functional grouping as suggested by Mr. Joseph Kunesh in the Territorial Report (Bulletin 10) and outlined in the proposed modified Civic Center plan of the City Planning Commission. Sufficient land is available within this area. Land consisting of several blocks, which is becoming increasingly more difficult to acquire, must be owned or controlled by the Territory and/or City and County, before detailed planning can be done.

The City Planning Commission will be glad to further discuss other plans, or details of this plan, for the best interests of Honolulu and Hawaii.

To accomplish this end, the City Planning Commission is desirous of adopting a plan acceptable to the community after a duly authorized public hearing in order that the area may be zoned for that particular use and incorporated as part of Honolulu's Master Plan.

Submitted by the City Planning Commission

J. Howard Ellis, Vice Chairman

George K. Houghtailing, Planning  
Engineer and Executive Secretary

Approved:  
September 15, 1944.



